

Kickapoo Valley Reserve UPDATE

Winter 2021

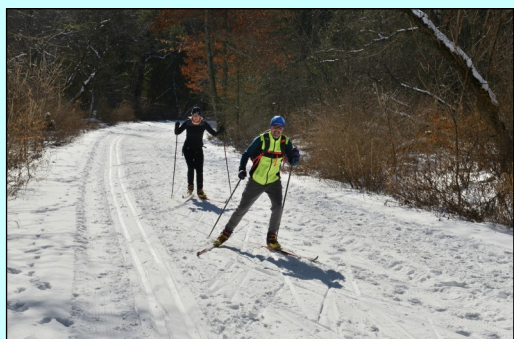
A quarterly publication highlighting education, property management & events on the KVR

Winter Activities at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

There are many activities to stay active and engaged this winter season at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR).

At the end of December, we received our first significant snowfall of the season, and were reminded of the tranquility of Winter and what we'll need to be prepared for the snowy months ahead. The KVR offers winter enthusiasts many opportunities including: Groomed cross-country ski-trails, snowshoeing, fat-tire biking, snowmobiling and more. Did we mention the night-time sky in the winter is incredible?! Camping is also an option for those hardy winter explorers. A few things to keep in mind this season...

- * The **Visitor Center remains closed to the public**. Staff is available Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm to assist and answer questions. Call 608-625-2960 or email: kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us
- * **Snowshoes** are available for rent, when conditions allow. Fee is for \$5/adult pair (no charge for child sizes) **Monday - Friday 8am-4:30pm**. Call 608-625-2960 or [email](#) to reserve a pair.
- * **Cross-country ski-trails** are groomed for classic & skate skiing, when conditions allow. We do not have skis available to rent.
- * There are approximately 8 miles of **fat tire bike (FTB) trails** on the Reserve, open **January 1 - March 15** but are subject to closure during the season. The following criteria must be in place for the FTB trails to remain open: **1.** The ground must be frozen. **2.** The temperature must be 25 degrees F or below.
- * **Winter camping is allowed at KVR**. Campsites are not plowed out or maintained in the winter. Pay at the self-pay station by the outdoor restrooms at the Visitor Center.
- * If hiking or snowshoeing, please stay off of the groomed ski and snowmobile trails.
- * Regular trail status updates will be posted on our [website](#) and KVR [Facebook](#) page.
- * A current year annual permit or KVR day pass is required for property use. [Purchase online](#).
- * Our Winter Trails Map can be found [online](#) and is included on page 4 in this newsletter.



Ice Formations Tread gently, watch your step, and enjoy these ever changing geological masterpieces!

Hundreds of millions of years ago, this area was covered by mountains. Slowly, these mountains were eroded away, forming layer upon layer of sand and mud which would eventually become the colorful sandstone and shale now typical of the area. To become rock, sand is cemented together with various minerals, forming layers of soft, erodible stone, as well as tough, resistant ones. One such layer of hard sandstone is found on the KVR. Immediately under this resistant layer is a crumbly layer. Water from small valleys moves over the resistant sandstone and erodes the soft layer underneath, creating the cave-like spaces. The KVR's beautiful ice formations are made by the freezing of water flowing from many small, hillside springs.



Treat rock & ice formations with care.

These are delicate structures.

TAKE ONLY PICTURES, LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

No fires allowed.

Fires on KVR property in designated areas only.

Kickapoo Valley Reserve
Website: <http://kickapovalley.wi.gov> Phone (608) 625-2960

Ice Formations are starting to build and usually last to the end of February. It is important to note that none of the formations are on designated/managed trails; difficult terrain & slippery conditions. For those who need an easier walk, visit the Ice Cave at Wildcat Mountain State Park off Highway F on the north edge of KVR. The tracks of hikers before you will help guide you to the formations as well as blue ribbons. Those shown on the [map](#) are meant for general users. Caution and knowing individual limits is important. Formations and their locations are fragile - DO NOT build fires, litter or climb on the ice = dangerous and destructive.

Check out the newest [education blog post](#) by KVR Instructor Chuck Hatfield all about the ice formation at KVR.

2021 Wild & Wet KVR Trail Challenge

Adults are challenged to hike (wild)/canoe (wet) all 50 trail segments and kids are challenged to hike/canoe 20 trail segments within the KVR during the calendar year. All completed forms must be delivered or postmarked by December 31. Everyone who completes the Trail Challenge will receive a small prize and a chance to win one of the following prizes! First Prize: 2022 KVR Friends Annual Membership (trail pass included) Second Prize: \$20 KVR Friends Gift Shop Gift Certificate Third Prize: \$15 KVR Friends Gift Shop Gift Certificate. Trail pass required to participate. Be sure to stay on designated trails.

The 2021 [Trail Challenge Form](#) is available on our website. Happy Trails!

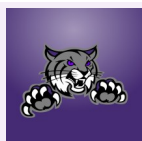
2021 Annual Passes are now available!

(valid until December 31, 2021)

[Purchase Online](#)

Purchase or renew your 2021 Annual Pass (passes will be mailed to you). Permits are required for the various visitor uses at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Activities such as hiking, biking and horseback riding require a day use or annual permit. Camping on the Reserve requires a separate permit; \$15/night for vehicle access sites or \$10/night for non-vehicle access. All vehicles parked at river access sites must display a day use, annual, camping, or vehicle parking permit. Consider becoming a Friends member for an additional \$15.00. Friends annual memberships can be [purchased online](#) and includes your KVR annual pass. All fee revenue is used to maintain, improve and protect the Reserve!





Kickapoo Valley Forest School Enrollment Opens in February

La Farge School District

KVFS is a tuition free public school.



KVFS will accept application for 4-year-old Kindergarten and Kindergarten students for the 2021-2022 school year starting in February 2021.

Applications received between February 1 and February 26 will be eligible for the Enrollment Lottery. More details and steps to apply can be found on the Kickapoo Valley Forest School [website](#).



KVFS strongly recommends that all families interested in applying for the 2021-2022 school year attend a virtual Enrollment Meeting on February 9, 2021 at 7:30pm or February 13, 2021 @ 10:00am

Upcoming KVFS events:

<https://www.kickapoovalleyschool.org/o/kvfs/events>

Watch for our weekly KVR Education Blog Post [here](#) and on our [Facebook](#) Page.

Youth Ski Club Underway!

Another year of youth ski club kicked off in December. All youth skis have been rented out for the season and the trails are starting to get use. Here's hoping for more snow!



Left picture:
Youth Ski-Club enthusiasts Laudy and Ellis Schultz enjoying a sunny day on the trail.

Right picture:
Iris and Elsa Gorrill taking in great conditions along the Old Hwy 131 Trail.

Coming Summer of 2021... KVR Youth Camps!



Registration Opening in February. 🔥

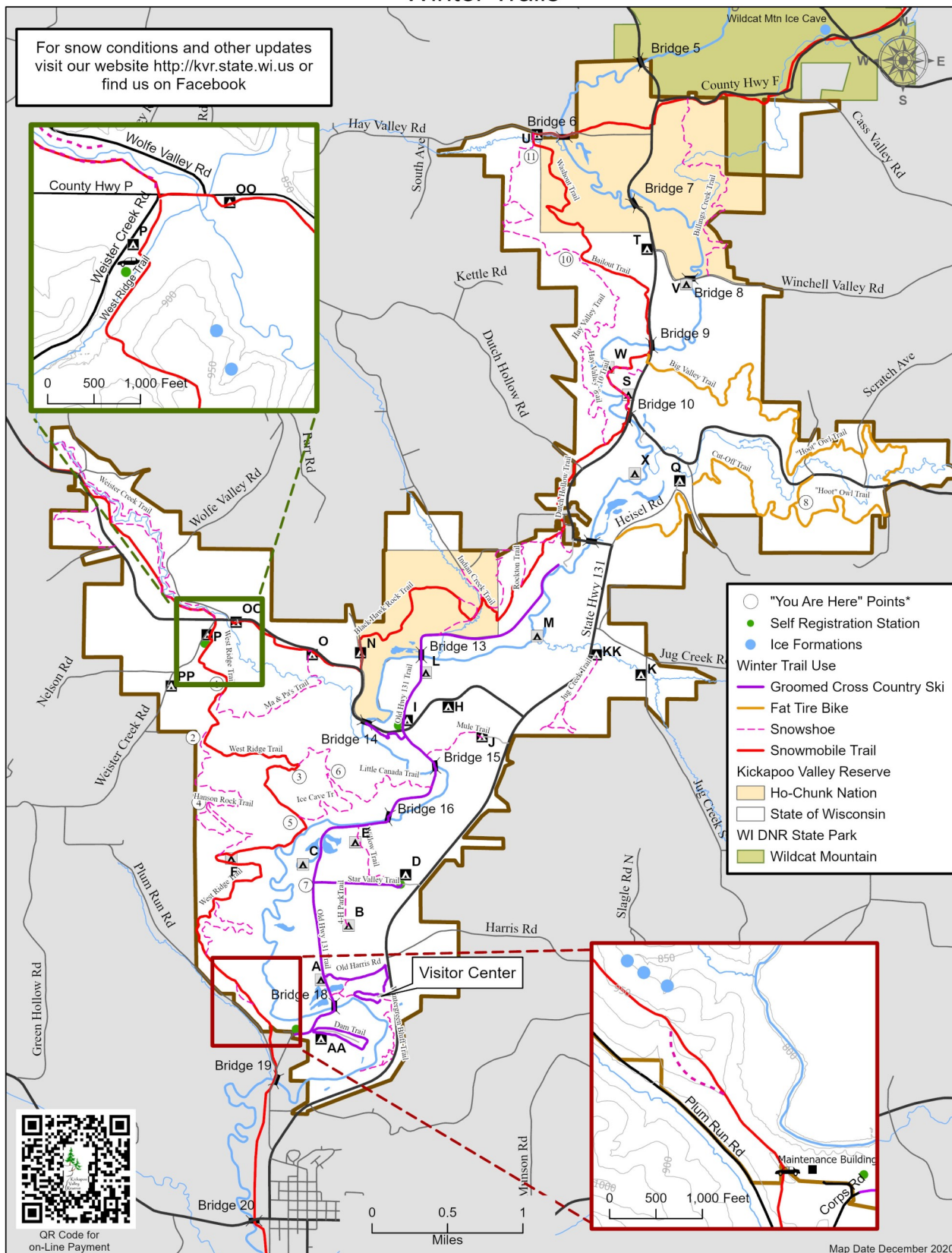
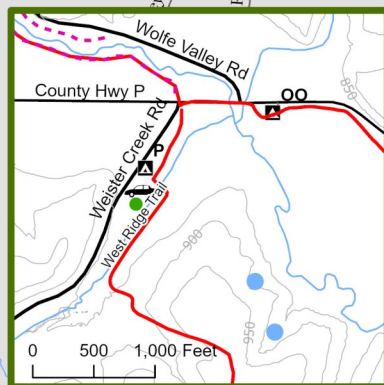
Stay tuned for more details!

Camps will follow strict COVID safety protocol and will take place mostly outdoors.



Kickapoo Valley Reserve Winter Trails

For snow conditions and other updates visit our website <http://kvr.state.wi.us> or find us on Facebook



Map Date December 2020

Trail Use Permits:

- Day Use/Person x \$5
- Day Use/Family x \$15
- Annual/Person x \$20
- Annual/Person x \$35

Camping (does not include trail use)

- Non-Vehicle access Sites x \$10/night
- Vehicle Access Sites x \$15/Night
- Campsite Capacity 10 people

River Access Parking Only: \$5/vehicle/day

"You are here Points" refer to markers at trail intersections. Snowshoes and Cross Country skis are welcome off trail. Please do not walk on Cross Country Ski tracks. Only fools (and those who follow fools) walk, ski, or snowmobile on a deceptively frozen Kickapoo River or streams.

Take Nothing but Pictures, Leave Nothing but Footprints.

Plowed Parking areas include KVR Visitor Center, Willow Camp (D), Old 131 Trail @ CTH P, Maintenance Building and Campsite P @ Weister Creek Rd. Trails and Campsites are not cleared for winter use.

Note: The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is separate from the WI DNR Park system. Thus KVR trail passes and DNR Park stickers are specific to each respective property.

Take me with on your next adventure. Don't have a printer? Download the map onto your smartphone or take a screenshot. Print maps also available outside the Visitor Center by the restrooms.

“Jeopardy comes to KVR”

By Ben Johnston

Alex: “For the final round, here is the answer...”



‘A recommended forestry practice, though unfortunately most often not having been implemented in the past, all too frequently neglected and overlooked in the present, yet fully appreciated by the future generations, involving thinning the density of seedlings, reducing poorly formed, diseased, and low quality trees, minimizing competition of light, nutrients and moisture among surrounding vegetation, including invasive species, such as garlic mustard, honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and buckthorn, and when necessary native shrubbery such as blackberries, elderberry, prickly ash, and in some situations other tree species that might be desired at other sites, selectively opening the canopy to stimulate and facilitate growth, while using physical methods such as felling, delimbing, and girdling, chemical methods such as foliar, stump treatment, and basal bark applications, and if appropriate prescribed fire as in the case of oak dominated stands, all of which being conducted in a suitable and timely manner, with the hopes and ambitions to nurture a forest in the manner one wishes it to grow to ultimately maximize harvest yields, with intent of preserving quality habitat and maintaining overall forest health’.

Marcy: “What are Best Forestry Practices (BFP)?”

Alex: “I am sorry, Marcy. And how much did you wager.....that leaves you with one dollar”.

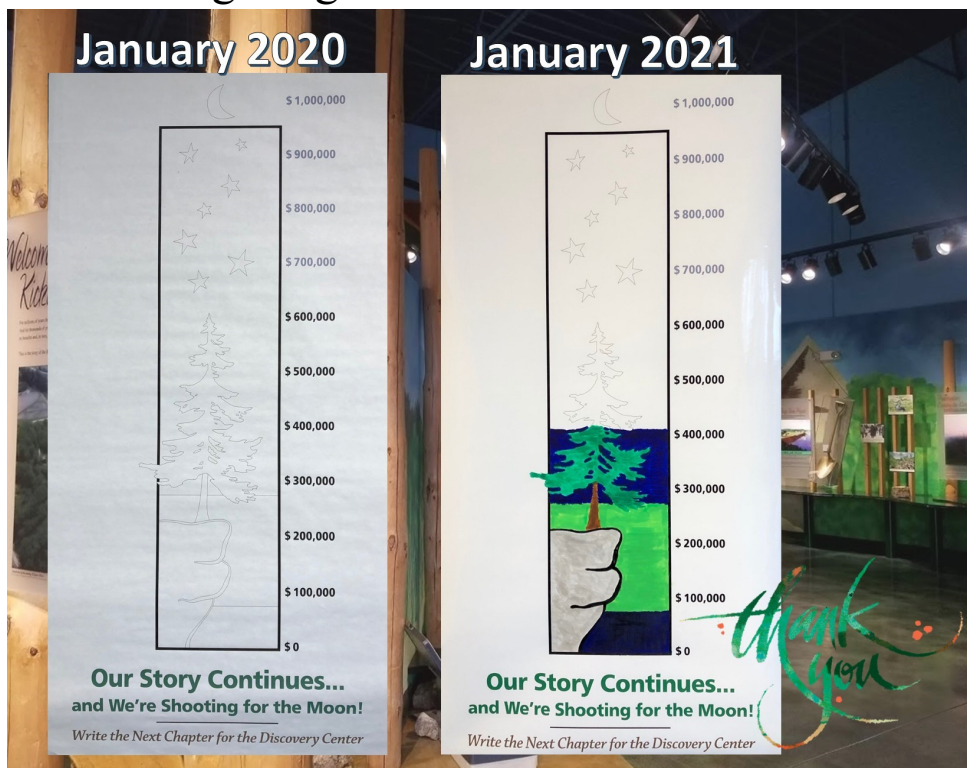
Ben: “What is More Bang, More Buck (MBMB)?

Alex: “Nope. That is wrong, Ben. Just plain wrong. Let’s see.... You wagered more than your winnings, leaving you with negative points, therefore, you are officially a complete loser which means..... No 2021 Encyclopedia set, no Rice-a-Roni, nor the turtle wax. You don’t even get the lousy home game.”

Russ: “What is Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)?”

Alex: “Correct. And how much.....Russ is the winner”.

Fundraising Progress Continues...



The Exhibit Upgrade campaign kicked off one year ago and we could not be more

thankful to all those who donated:

Individuals, businesses, organizations,
Foundations & groups.

In November, Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust offered to match all donations received through the end of the year. Over 130 of you donated in those 61 days which turned your \$85,000 into \$170,000 and took the overall total to \$400,000!

Special thanks to the Friends of KVR for administering, and to ALL our friends who donated.

Planning for 2021

By Marcy West, Executive Director

While we start the new year with high hopes for things to get back to some sense of normal, we know it won't be immediate. Here's an update on what we're planning for at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve:

The Visitor Center building will be closed to the public until early April in compliance with directives for State-owned, non-essential buildings. A staff member is in the building Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm and happy to help you via phone or if you call ahead to plan a meeting. All staff are available via [email](#) or virtual meetings. Call 608-625-2960 for details.

Winter Recreation is welcomed and encouraged. As conditions improve for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, fat-tire biking, snow shoeing and ice formations/ice caves we will update the website, Facebook and Instagram sites regularly. Early season catch & release trout fishing and various hunting seasons also continue under Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources license requirements. 2020 brought an unprecedented number of people to the KVR and we assume that will continue. Please be courteous on this unique, shared-use property.

Events including Winter Festival and Creative Communities are cancelled this year due to the pandemic. We look forward to bringing them back bigger and better than ever in 2022. Guided Ice Cave hikes are not an option, but we are making plans for volunteers to be stationed in some of the most popular areas to answer questions and make sure people are going in the right direction for safe viewing.

Spring hopes eternal of course as we look forward to better weather, less virus and more vaccinations so we can reopen the building and welcome students of all ages. Stay tuned. In the meantime, the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board and staff will continue working through management plans, exhibit upgrade design and prepare for Summer Camps and the very exciting Kickapoo Valley Forest School for the Fall of 2021, trail projects and property maintenance.

These winter months allow time to reflect on the things we learned in 2020 and plan for what should or shouldn't be kept as management aspects for the Reserve in the future. For example, online purchasing of annual passes has gone very well and will probably be continued. Other issues relating to revenue, building access, trash management at river access and campsites will need more discussion. If you'd like to participate by joining the [Land Management](#) or [Education & Tourism](#) committees where policies evolve, please let us know.

Here's hoping we can stick to our Plans in 2021. Happy New Year!

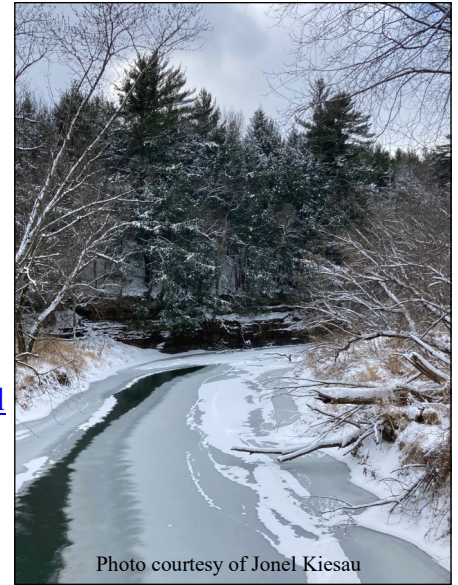


Photo courtesy of Jonel Kiesau



The Viroqua Food Cooperative December 2020 Give Where You Live Recipient was the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. With your help rounding up purchases at the register, the VFC collected \$3,061.31 for the KVR. **Thank you so much VFC and VFC shoppers for your very generous contributions!** The donation was matched by Prairie Springs: Paul Fleckenstein Trust making the total \$6,122.62 for KVR! Thank you for helping keep the KVR unique - a place like no other.

Pictured (L to R): VFC Staff Sally Colacino (also a Friends of KVR Board Member) with Jonel Kiesau, Kickapoo Valley Reserve Education Director.